

Full Length Research Paper

Factors associated with young Taiwanese people's preference of green tea

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The purpose of this study is to identify Japanese's green tea consumption preferences among young people in Taiwan between the ages of 18-30 and assess the possible tea market opportunities for Japanese's green tea in Taiwan, among young people. Questionnaire was used to collect data which were spread to 200 university students, aged between 18-30 years. Firstly, the tea product tasting survey provided four kinds of Japanese green tea. Next, the questionnaire was divided into four parts. Findings of this study show Taiwanese young people prefer taste attribute as the main factor to selecting their tea preference, to others who choose Minamisayaka mostly as their tea preference, with Benifuuki in second place. This study also aggregates the evaluation of Japanese green tea after tea tasting.

Keywords: Green tea, Taiwanese, Japanese, preference.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Tea is an aromatic beverage which is a hot water infusion of processed leaves of *Camellia sinensis* (Pinto, 2013). Tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world next to water. China and India are respectively the largest and second largest producer and consumer of tea and together account for half of world's tea production (Singh and Anita, 2012). Global tea production has been increased in the last decade, reaching 4.1 million tonnes in 2010 (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United

Nations (FAO, 2012; Zou et al., 2015; Engelhardt et al., 2016). It is the only beverage commonly served hot or cold, anytime, anywhere and for any occasion (Su and Arab, 2002; Chang, 2015).

Taiwan is famous for three main types of tea; oolong tea, black tea and green tea. The earliest record of tea trees found in Taiwan can be traced back to 1717 in Shui Sha Lian, present-day Yuchih and Puli, Nantou County. Oolongs grown in Taiwan account for about 20% of world

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production (Drabova et al., 2012). Tea drinking is a long and well-established part of the local culture in Taiwan (Huang et al., 2006; Engelhardt et al., 2016); as an important beverage, it has been cultivated successfully for more than 120 years (Makiuchi et al., 2016). Tea production in Taiwan is decreasing, but tea consumption per capita in Taiwan is steadily increasing (Mu-Lien, 2014; International Tea Committee, 2014) because drinking green tea has been associated with many health benefits to the human body. Taiwan does not produce high volumes of tea, but its teas are well-represented in specialty tea stores and are well-known among tea connoisseurs (Sharma et al., 2007; Pirina, 2004; Oze et al., 2014; Persistence Market Research Corp, 2015)

The vast majority of tea produced in Taiwan is consumed in Taiwan. Taiwan has a strong tea culture, and the Taiwanese tea market is considered highly demanding; Taiwan imports some of the highest-quality oolong teas from other countries.

Recently, the Japanese government created the policy to expand green tea export to other countries and according to Takagi (2015) and Makiuchi et al. (2016) Taiwan is one of target countries for the export of green tea. Based on the preceding information, Taiwanese culture provides an increasing trend for tea consumption and a high opportunity for Japanese green tea in the Taiwan market. However, this is not substantial information regarding the consumer preference of Japanese tea among young Taiwanese consumers. For the Japanese companies to understand the consumer preference in Taiwan, this survey helps to give a clearer picture of consumer preference.

Problem statement

Objection and research questions

Objective 1 is to identify Japanese's green tea consumption preferences among young people in Taiwan between the ages of 18-30 years old. The research questions are given as follows:

1. What kind of Japanese green tea do young people in Taiwan like most among others, Minami-sayaki, Beni-fuuki, Matcha and Tea bags?
2. What is the most sensory attribute that contributes to Taiwanese young people's preference?
3. What is the sensory attribute that Taiwanese young people dislike?
4. How is the best way they prefer to consume Japanese green tea?

Objective 2 is to assess the possible tea market opportunities for Japanese green tea in Taiwan, among young people. See the research questions:

1. What is the average frequency of Taiwanese young

people drinking green tea?

2. How well did Japanese green tea samples in this survey meet expectations?

3. How will they feel, if in future, they see Japanese green tea products available in the shops?

Hypothesis

According to several references, there are two expected outcomes from this research, these are:

1. Young Taiwanese people choose tea by the taste of the tea.
2. Young Taiwanese people prefer the Minamisayaka Japanese Green Tea sample, to other samples.

Purpose and significance of study

The purpose of this study is to provide some consumer preference information about Japanese green tea among young Taiwanese people. The proposed study was of value to various stakeholders that include the government, policy makers, communities, private companies, NGOs and academics alike. This is because the study provided data that reflected young Taiwanese consumer's preference regarding Japanese green tea and also helped to evaluate market value of the marketing of Japanese green tea in Taiwan.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This research was experimented by product test to target groups, performing data collection and by surveying with questionnaires, to conduct a statistical analysis to interpret results.

Sampling design

Target area is the university's students. The survey was conducted in several places within the university, such as the cafeteria, library, gymnasium, and main gate, on a time scale of around 10 days.

Instrumentation

This research was conducted using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into 4 parts as follows; 1) personal information: gender, age, student major 2) beverage habits and preferences: how they consume tea, reason to consume tea, what kind of tea products they most like, the way to drink tea, 3) green tea consuming: how do they like green tea, image of Japanese green tea 4) Evaluation of Japanese green tea after tea tasting: which Japanese green tea sample do they like, preferable sensation, how do they like each kind of Japanese green tea (Likert scales). 4 types of Japanese Green Tea were provided by Shizuoka Prefecture University, Japan.

Data collection method

The tea sample used 4 kinds of Japanese's green tea, namely Minami-sayaka, Beni-fuuki, Matcha and Tea bags for testing, provided by

Shizuoka Prefecture University, Japan. The tea preparation procedure is as follows:

1. Minamisayaka: Use 4 grams of loose tea leaf then pour 150 ml hot water, 70-80°C and wait for 90 s.
2. Benifuuki: Use the same method used for Minami-sayaka
3. Matcha: Use 1 gram of Matcha powder then, pour on a little hot water,70-80°C and stir to dissolve it. Then pour on more hot/cold water to fill cup. Total amount was 150 ml.
4. Tea Bag: Use 500 ml of PET bottle water (room temperature) then, put a tea bag into PET bottle. Move the tea bag 10 times with up-and-down motion during infusion. Wait until the color become light green in approximately 5 min.

The tea is approximately 30 ml of brewed green tea poured into a paper cup. It was served by Tea bag, Minami-sayaka, Beni-fuuki and Matcha, respectively. Finally, the conducting survey procedure is to provide the 4 kinds of tea in a stand-booth, located in a particular place, being the defined research area. Then, the respondents tried the 4 kinds of tea in that tea tasting event. Thereafter, they filled out the research questionnaire.

Statistical analysis

The statistics and analytical tools that were used for analysing the data is SPSS software by Chi-Square.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Figure 1 shows that the respondents' gender distribution consisted of 51% females and 49% males. It means that 102 females and 98 males participated in the survey.

In Figure 2, 60 respondents were 18-22 years old, 110 respondents were between 23-26 years old, and 30 respondents were between 27-30 years old. It means that more than a half of respondents were in the second age category, which was between 23-26 years old.

Figure 3 shows that the education distribution of the respondents, concentrated on the Bachelor Degree. This means more than a half of respondents (115 people) had Bachelor Degree and were taking a Master Program in NCHU. In addition, respondents who had Senior High School Certificate, Master Degree and Doctoral Degree accounted for 29.5% (59 people); 11.5% (23 people); and 1.5% (3 people) respectively.

Table 1 shows the city or county of the respondents' origin. Fortunately, almost all cities or counties in Taiwan were represented by the respondents, so the differences were only from their distribution. From Table 1, it can be seen obviously that most of the respondents came from Kaohsiung (21 people). Then, there were four cities as the origin of the respondents, which had the lowest frequency. These are Hsinchu, Hualien, Touyuan and Yilan.

Crosstabulation and chi-square test

Figure 4 shows the main reasons why the respondents

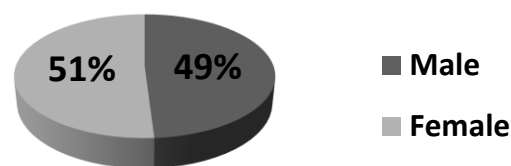


Figure 1. Respondent's gender distribution.

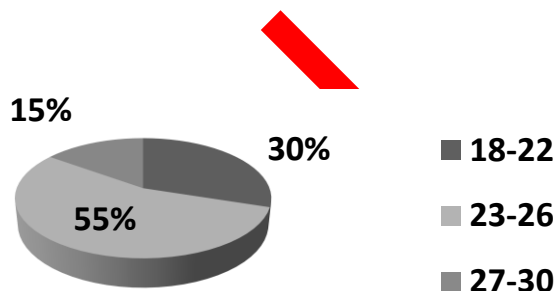


Figure 2. Categorised respondent's age distribution.

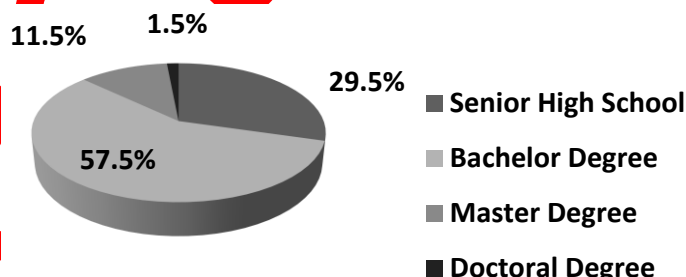


Figure 3. Respondent's education level distribution.

consume tea generally. It shows that the main reason which controlled their choice was the taste of the tea. It proved the previous study that consumers would choose the green tea because of the flavor (Lee and Chambers, 2007; Lee et al., 2008b in Lee and Chambers, 2010). Actually, this research provided five attributes as the main reason, such as taste, aroma, health, trend and habit. However, no one chose aroma or trend as their main reason to decide the green tea preference.

In Table 2, it could be found that both male and female chose tea by taste preference, which were 53% (52/98*100) and 59% (60/102*100), respectively. It also proved the previous study as mentioned above. In addition, this research speculated that young people were still concerned about their food consumption based on the taste preference, to others. Following the above analysis, it could be found that there was not a significant relationship between gender and taste preference factor (Pearson Value=0.714), as can be seen in Table 3.

From the table above, taste only had significance to hometown variable which means the place of origin where

Table 1. The city of respondent's hometown.

City	Frequency	%
Chiayi	17	8.5
Hsinchu	4	2.0
Hualien	18	9.0
Kaohsiung	21	10.5
Keelung	4	20.0
Miaoli	14	7.0
Nantou	18	9.0
Pingtung	7	3.5
Taichung	17	8.5
Tainan	15	7.5
Taipei	17	8.5
Taitung	7	3.5
Touyuan	4	2.0
Yilan	4	2.0
Yunlin	17	8.5
Zanghua	16	8.0
Total	200	100

Source: compiled from this study.

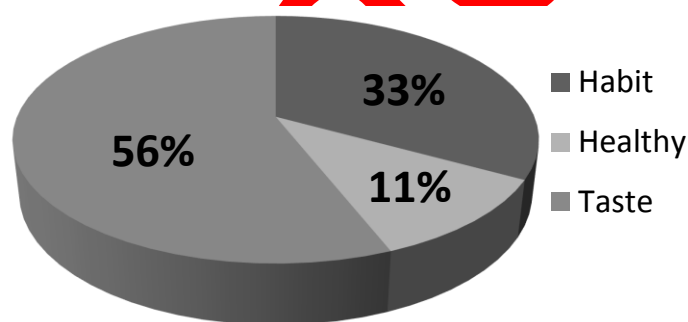


Figure 4. Main reason why young Taiwanese people's prefer Japanese green tea.

Table 2. Crosstabulation: Reason-gender.

		Reason			Total
		Habit	Healthy	Taste	
Gender	Male	31 (32%)	15 (15%)	52 (53%)	98 (100%)
	Female	35 (34%)	7 (7%)	60 (59%)	102 (100%)
Total		66 (33%)	22 (11%)	112 (56%)	200 (100%)

Note: $P_{value} \geq 0.05$. Source: compiled from this study.

the respondents come from could affect their preference for tea. But it had negative relationship with gender, categorised age, and education level. It means that there was no significant correlation between taste preference to gender, categorised age, and education level. On the

other hand, the origin of the respondents could affect the tea preference factor, particularly taste preference.

In addition, all respondents in all age ranges also chose tea by taste preference. These were 18-22 years, 23-26 years, and 27-30 years and they chose as 48% (20/60*100),

Table 3. Pearson value between demographic variables and tea preference factors.

Variables	Habit	Healthy	Taste
Gender	0.216	0.196	0.714
Categorised age	0.037	0.126	0.416
Education level	0.032	0.297	0.212
H metown	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: compiled from this study.

Table 4. Crosstabulation: Reason-categorised age.

		Reason			Total
		Habit	Healthy	Taste	
Age Categorisation	18-22	22 (37%)	9 (15%)	29 (48%)	60 (100%)
	23-26	36 (33%)	10 (9%)	64 (58%)	110 (100%)
	27-30	8 (27%)	3 (10%)	19 (63%)	30 (100%)
Total		66 (33%)	22 (11%)	112 (56%)	200 (100%)

Note: $P_{value} \geq 0.05$. Source: compiled from this study.

Table 5. Crosstabulation: Reason-level of education.

		Reason			Total
		Habit	Healthy	Taste	
Education Level	Senior High School	21 (36%)	9 (15%)	29 (49%)	59 (100%)
	Bachelor	34 (30%)	11 (10%)	70 (61%)	115 (100%)
	Master	11 (48%)	2 (9%)	10 (43%)	23 (100%)
	Doctoral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
Total		66 (33%)	22 (11%)	112 (56%)	200 (100%)

Note: $P_{value} \geq 0.05$. Source: compiled from this study.

58% ($64/110 \times 100$), 63% ($19/30 \times 100$), respectively. This can be seen in Table 4.

Futhermore, the result of crosstabulation between reason and level of education variable as in the Table 5 shows a few uniqueness for master level respondents, who chose habit as their preference more than other factors which was 48% ($11/23 \times 100$), better than healthy and taste which were 9% ($2/23 \times 100$) and 43% ($10/23 \times 100$), respectively.

From Table 6, the taste preference depended on the hometown or origin of the respondents. For example, most of respondents from Miaoli chose tea because of their habit - as many as 79% ($11/14 \times 100$), compared to the respondents from Kaohsiung who chose tea for healthy reasons - as many as 52% ($11/21 \times 100$), or the respondents from Tainan who preferred taste to all the others - ($14/15 \times 100$). The previous study held in U.S said that U.S. consumers liked green tea samples with lower flavor intensity and lower bitterness intensity (Lee and Chambers, 2010). It also describes the background of

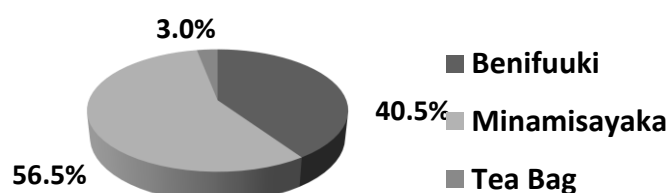
residence or hometown influence on the preference of food, as well. Table 6, indeed, shows that the origin of the people had a positive relationship with food (including tea) preference factors.

Moreover, the research also did a pilot-test before the real survey for this study. Based on the result of the pilot-test, Taiwanese young people preferred Minamisayaka to other teas after tasting, so this study also hypothesized that they would choose Minamisayaka more than the others too. Fortunately, the result of the real survey was as the pilot-test for this part (Figure 5).

Unfortunately, from four kinds of tea which were provided, no one chose Matcha as the best preference for them. Based on the obtaining data, the respondents only put Matcha out in the second grade as the highest rank of this category. It also could be known from a short interview which was done in the survey that the taste of Matcha was too bitter if consumed without any additional flavour. Also, some of the respondents said that they usually consumed Matcha as an additional taste in other

Table 6. Crosstabulation: Reason-Hometown.

		Reason			Total
		Habit	Healthy	Taste	
Hometown	Chiayi	4 (23%)	3 (18%)	10 (59%)	17 (100%)
	Hsinchu	2 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	4 (100%)
	Hualien	2 (11%)	0 (00%)	16 (89%)	18 (100%)
	Kaohsiung	5 (24%)	11 (52%)	5 (24%)	21 (100%)
	Keelung	2 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	4 (100%)
	Miaoli	11 (79%)	1 (7%)	2 (14%)	14 (100%)
	Nantou	5 (28%)	0 (0%)	13 (72%)	18 (100%)

**Figure 5.** Kind of tea preferences after tasting event.

forms, such as in cake or in some cosmetics. This situation is also the same as the previous study which chose U.S green tea consumers as the sample target for the study that U.S. consumers liked green tea samples with lower flavor intensity and lower bitterness intensity (Lee and Chambers, 2010).

From the study process, some additional information was obtained by the participants, from their feedback. At first, some of them said Minamisayaka and Benifuuki favors were quite similar to Oolong tea. Some people felt excited with Tea bags and Macha because they were different from their familiar tea taste, but some people who often drank tea said that Tea bags were tasteless for them. Some participants said if they discussed about Japanese green tea, Matcha was previously the most familiar of Japanese green tea in their perception.

Validating the research methodology

The study population consists of university students, among whom almost half drink tea beverages regularly (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). Thus, using university students as the study population conforms to the main target market of tea beverages and mirrors their economic approach.

With regard to the sample, because of budgetary constraints, representative sampling is impossible, so undergraduate students provide a reasonably matched sample (Lee and Liao, 2009). Therefore, the participants were selected by convenient sampling that is, any participant willing to participate in the survey. The

sample size is 200 students, age between 18-30 for NCHU Taiwanese students. The population sample was used because the participants were practiced in drinking tea beverages regularly and they were representative.

The social implications

This study enhances the understanding of tea markets and marketing in the future. The practical implications of this study identified Japanese's green tea consumption preference and the possible market for young people in Taiwan. The social implications of this study show the new tendency of increasing tea consumption per capita in Taiwan. This study also has academic value and value to strategy makers when it comes to green tea marketing strategy problems, such as originality and value.

DISCUSSION

Limitation of study

Since every study is unique, this research on Japanese green tea may not be exceptional. There are limitations and risks relating to the undertaking of a research of this nature, both from the operational and methodological points of view. Some young people did not always cooperate during the study and give correct information. Also another limitation might be the survey was carried in one area, Taichung City, and NCHU particularly, while it would have been good to carry it out in different areas of Taiwan and obtain other opinions from young consumers.

In addition, the limitation of time also influenced the quality of this study, such as the number of respondents who were only 200 people, so it was insufficiently representative to generalise the real situation, especially for a study case in NCHU; a few number of research team who could not be quite intensive to spread the concentration for each respondent; and the limitation of variables to measure in this study as well. Therefore, it can be elaborated for example, by adding several descriptive variables, such as ethnicity, their interest in increased mental or physical awareness or capacity, modifying bodyweight, and/or promoting good health.

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify Japanese green tea consumption preferences among young people in Taiwan between the age of 18-30 years old with the study case in National Chung Hsing University (NCHU), Taiwan. This research provided five attributes as the main reasons, such as taste, aroma, healthy, trend, and habit. In addition, it also used four kinds of Japanese green tea, such as two kinds of leaf tea (Benifuuki and Minamisayaka), a kind of tea bag and tea powder (Matcha).

Then based on the research process, it found that Taiwanese young people prefer taste attribute as the main factor to selecting their tea preferences, to others. Furthermore, the survey participants chose Minamisayaka most as their tea preference, and Benifuuki in the second place. It could be because some respondents informed that the flavors of Minamisayaka and Benifuuki were quite similar to Oolong Tea which is very famous for Taiwanese. On the other side, some people felt excited with Tea bags and Matcha because they had different flavors from their familiar tea, but there were some people who often drank tea who said that tea bags were tasteless for them. Some participants informed if they talked about Japanese green tea, Matcha had previously been the most familiar of Japanese green tea in their perception.

It is obvious this survey has several limitations, such as the undertaking of a research of this nature, both from the operational and the methodological point of view. The young people were not always fully cooperative during the study in giving correct information, and because the survey was only carried out in the area of NCHU with only 200 respondents as the sample, it was insufficiently representative to generalise. Other factors were the small number forming the research team who worked on this study, especially in the survey process and the limited number of variables.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Appendix 1. English Version Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JAPANESE GREEN TEA PREFERENCE BY TEA TASTING

Introduction

Hello! My name is ----. I am conducting survey to understand consumer preference on tea beverage, especially on Japanese green tea. Moreover, it is also to understand a tea market in future. This study will identify Japanese's green tea consumption preference and possible market among young people in Taiwan.

This survey would like to ask you a few questions and take time around 5 min. I am not selling anything; I am only interested in your opinions. In addition, your answers will be held in the strictest confidence and added to the answers from others who are participating in this survey. No one's answers will be looked at individually.

Japanese Green Tea

I would like to introduce four kinds of Japanese green tea that you would try, such as green tea instant bag, Matcha, Benefuuki, and Minamisayaka. There are more information for them:

1. Green Tea Instant Bag



Narrow shaped tea bag is ideal for 500 ml-plastic bottles. It is designed for customers who want to enjoy freshly brewed authentic green tea outside. Customers only need to shake it well before drinking in the bottle.

2. Matcha



Matcha is a type of powdered Japanese green tea. It is increasing the chlorophyll content and creating a gorgeous green color. The green tea powder is not strained out before consuming, so costumers are consuming the entire leaf. It is only 1/2 tsp needed to brew a traditional cup of Matcha.

3. **Benefuuki**



Benifuuki is a kind of Japanese green tea leaf. It should be brewed hotter (80–90°C) and can be steeped longer to let its flavor fully unfold.

4. **Minamisayaka**



Minami Sayaka is also kind of Japanese green tea leaf. It can be good to slightly warm down water temperature, about 85° C.

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Gender : Male Female
2. Age (western year):
3. Level of education:
4. Hometown :
5. Major :

Part 2: Beverage Habits and Preference

1. Could you provide ranking for your preferred beverage? *(Please fill number to rank, 1 for the best answer respectively)*

Tea	Water	Coffee	Fruit juice	Soda drink	Alcohol
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2. How often do you drink tea?
 - Every meal
 - Everyday
 - Few times per week
 - Few times per months
 - Few times per year
 - Never

3. What are the reasons you choose tea as your beverage? (Please fill number to rank, 1 for the best answer respectively)

- Taste Aroma Healthy Trend Habit

4. What kind of tea you usually drink? (Multiple choosing)

- No addition Add sugar/sweetener Add milk
 Add favor/juice Add honey Other, _____

5. What is your the most important criteria to buy tea?

- Price Taste Aroma Brand Packaging

6. How do you usually get your tea for drink?

- Brew by yourself Tea Cafe Bottle tea from a shop Others:

*If brewed by yourself, what kind of tea product will you use:

- Tea leaf Tea bag Powder/Instant tea

7. Please provide ranking of tea type you prefer. (Please fill number to rank, 1 for the best answer respectively)

Green tea	Black tea	Oolong tea	White tea

Part 3: Consumption of Japanese Green Tea

1. Do you ever drink Japanese green tea?

- Yes No (If no, skip no. 2)

2. What kind of Japanese green tea you ever drink? (Multiple choosing)

- Benifukii Matcha Tea bag Minamisayaka
 Others (please specify.....)

3. What do you expect from consuming Japanese green tea? (Multiple choosing)

- Flavor High quality Healthy benefits Cultural thing
 Others (please specify.....)

Part 4: Evaluation of Japanese Green Tea after Tea Tasting.

1. What kinds of Japanese green tea you prefer most after tasting? (Please fill number to rank, no.1 for the best).

Minamisayaka	Benifukii	Matcha	Tea bag

2. How do you like **Benifukii** Japanese green tea? Please, rate your opinion on the following criteria.

	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Very good (4)	Excellent (5)
Taste					
Aroma					
Color					

3. How do you like Minamisayaka Japanese green tea? Please, rate your opinion on the following criteria.

	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Very good (4)	Excellent (5)
Taste					
Aroma					
Color					

4. How do you like Matcha Japanese green tea? Please, rate your opinion on the following criteria.

	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Very good (4)	Excellent (5)
Taste					
Aroma					
Color					

5. How do you like Tea bag? Please, rate your opinion on the following criteria.

	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Very good (4)	Excellent (5)
Taste					
Aroma					
Color					

6. Which statement best describe how well Japanese green tea tasting met your expectation?

- 7.
- Better than you expected
 - About the same as you expected
 - Not as good as you expected

8. If you see Japanese green tea product available on the store/shop, which statement describe how you feel about buying?

- Definitely would buy
- Probably would buy
- Might or might not would buy
- Probably would not buy
- Definitely would not buy

9. What kinds of Japanese green tea product you would like to buy most?

- Tea bag
- Tea leaf
- Tea powder
- Bottle
- a cup from tea cafe

10. Which type of Japanese green tea that is the most convinience for you if you have to serve tea by yourself?

- Tea bag
- Benefukii
- Minamisayaka
- Matcha

Reason:

.....

.....

11. What kind of store would you expect the Japanese green tea products to be sold?

- Supermarket/Hypermarket
- Tea cafe
- Traditional market
- Others (please specify.....)

12. How often do you think you would buy Japanese green tea products in the future?

- Once a week or more often
- Once every 2 - 3 weeks
- Once a month
- Once every 2 or 3 months
- Once every 4 - 6 months
- Once or twice a year
- Never

*****Thank you for your cooperation *****